

fiction,, if Edmond About seemed to have run to seed prematurely with his interminable novel, "La Vieille Eoche," Octave Feuillet was writing his best book, "Monsieur de Camors." And if the historical novel, as Dumas had conceived it, had declined to mere trash, those well-known literary partners, Erckmann-Chatrian, by transforming it and dealing exclusively with the period of the Revolution and the First Empire, were achieving repeated successes, their popularity being the greater among the Parisians on account of the Republican spirit of their writings. Then the foibles of the time were vividly illustrated by Taine's amusing "Graindorge," and Droz's "Monsieur, Madame, et Be'be'," the last as strange a medley of immorality, wit, and true and honest feeling as ever issued from the press. But there was no redeeming feature in the nonsensical stories of semi-courtesans to which the brilliant Arsene Houssaye had declined; no shade of literary merit in the wild, unending romances with which Ponson du Terrail harrowed the feelings of every Parisian doorkeeper and apprentice. Perhaps the best serial writer of the time was It!mile Gaboriau, for though his style was devoid of any literary quality, he was ingenious and plausible, and by the exercise of these gifts raised the detective novel of commerce from

the depths in  
which he found it.

But a delightful story-teller was coming to the front in the person of young Alphonse Daudet, who, since his arrival in Paris some nine years previously, had made his way sufficiently well to secure the performance of a one-act

(March, 1866), and when Got, one of the performers, had occasion to exclaim, "England, the land of liberty ! " nearly the entire audience, composed of the intellectual leaders of Paris, rose and applauded tumultuously, in spite of the Emperor's presence. He was deeply impressed by this demonstration.